

JEFFERSON'S BIBLE IN FACSIMILE TO BE GIVEN TO THE WORLD

In a Letter to a Friend He Deprecated the Efforts His Contemporaries Made to Pillory Him as an Anti-Christian.

Author of Declaration of Independence Eliminated All Dogmas and Left the Pure Philosophy of Our Saviour in the Book.

THE visitor to the National Museum is embarrassed and distracted by unnumbered claims on his attention in every corridor. For an hour his interest is enlisted. Then it grows exacting. Before he has been half a day wandering past its cases his mind is dull.

What would his attitude be, if he knew that only about one-third of the Smithsonian collections were offered to the public view? If he knew that many of the institution's greatest treasures are, of necessity, protected from use and light?

An idea of his thought is now offered by the widespread and continued interest in the curious New Testament, compiled by Thomas Jefferson. For twenty years that little red leather volume rested under lock and key in the desk of Dr. Cyrus Adler, philologist of the institution. It was almost unknown, but today it is the subject of more comment than any of the "five best-selling books" advertised by American purveyors of fiction.

Probably less than a thousand persons have examined a single page of the text. It is certain that not more than a thousand persons have seen the original. Yet, its nature, its form, and its spirit are as well known as Tolstoy's "Resurrection."

Debate in the House. A debate in the House of Representatives, last fall, aroused this extraordinary attention. The existence of the book had been made known through the newspapers, as one of Dr. Adler's discoveries, while engaged in philological labors in Baltimore. That only one copy existed was equally well known. The House of Representatives proposed, therefore, that the National Government should print 5,000 facsimiles, for the use of libraries, colleges, and students.

The opposition provoked was keen. One member asked the House to publish as many thousand copies of the Ten Commandments. Another introduced a resolution to print a good spelling book. But the measure was carried. In a few months, perhaps by October 1, the text of Jefferson's now famous "Bible" will have become public property.

His Religious Tenets. Not the least effect of this agitation, has been a widespread discussion of Jefferson's religious tenets. According to many newspapers and several magazines, he was an atheist. But the greater number of editors and his opinion on all religious subjects as matters of indeterminate doubt.

Yet a casual examination of Jefferson's letters at the Library of Congress makes these things distinct and clear. That the third President of the United States never was an atheist and that he has given cogent and lucid expression of his faith.

Epistles sent to friends from Washington and Monticello indicate that his interest in religion was continued and deep. To John Adams, with whom he corresponded regularly after both had retired from active political life, and to Dr. Benjamin Rush with whom he seems to always to have been intimate, he wrote frequently, if not freely, on this and nearly every other matter of religious interest.

Letter to Dr. Rush. The letter to Dr. Rush is unusually interesting, as its text will signify:

"Washington, April 21, 1820. 'Dear Sir: In some of the delightful conversations with you in the evening of 1798-99, and which served as an antidote to the afflictions of the crisis through which our country was then labouring, the Christian religion was sometimes our topic, and I then promised you that, one day or other, I would give you my views of it. They are the result of a life of enquiry and reflection and were written by me in the anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruptions of Christianity I am indeed opposed, but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense in which he wished anyone to be, sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to himself every human excellence, and believing that no others have a right to it. At the short intervals since those conversations, when I could justly abstract my mind from public affairs, this subject has been under my contemplation.

"But the more I considered it, the more it expanded beyond the measure of either my time or information. In the moment of my late departure from Monticello, I received from Dr. Priestly his little treatise of 'Socrates and Jesus Compared.'"

science for himself to resist invasions of it in the case of others; or their case may be change of circumstances become his own. It behooves him, too, in his own case, to give no example of concession betraying the common right of independent opinion, by answering questions of faith which the laws have left between God and himself. Accept of my affectionate salutations.

"TH. JEFFERSON.
"Doctor Benjamin Rush."

Written With Care. This letter was evidently written with much care. Like most of the correspondence of that day, its sentences are begun with small letters, and abbreviations are frequent, such as a peculiar ring for the word "and," "tho" for the word "though," and "I'll" for "I will." The letter has, moreover, been much handled, its edges are torn, and it has turned extremely yellow. But it has an unmistakable air of formality, and was surely designed to give the writer's dear friend a distinct commission as to the care of the "Syllabus" which it conveyed to him.

The "Syllabus" was likewise carefully drawn. It is arranged in subdivisions according to their importance, with figures and captions neatly underscored. There are only two corrections in the text, and both occur in the same sentence, where he says, "And the committing to writing of his life and doctrines fell on unlettered and ignorant men," which reads in the first draft, "On the most unlettered and ignorant of men."

Text of Syllabus. Otherwise the original declaration of Jefferson's views was made in the following form:

"Syllabus of an estimate of the doctrines of Jesus, compared with those of others.
"In a comparative view of the ethics of the enlightened nations of antiquity, of the Jews, and of Jesus, no notice should be taken of the corruptions of reason among the ancients, to wit, the idolatry and superstition of the vulgar, nor of the corruptions of Christianity by the learned among its professors.

"Let a just view be taken of the moral principles inculcated by the most esteemed of the sects of ancient philosophy, or of their individuals; particularly Pythagoras, Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, Epictetus, Seneca, Antoninus.

I.—Philosophers. "Their precepts related chiefly to ourselves, and the government of those passions which, unrestrained, would disturb our tranquility of mind. In this branch of philosophy they were really great.

"In developing our duties to others they were short and defective. They embraced indeed the circles of kindred and friends, and inculcated patriotism, the love of country in the aggregate, as a primary obligation toward our neighbors and countrymen they taught justice, but scarcely viewed them as within the circle of benevolence. Still less have they inculcated peace, charity and love to our fellow-men, or embraced with benevolence the whole family of mankind.

II.—Jews. "Their system was Deism—that is, the belief in one only God; but their ideas of him and of his attributes were degrading and injurious.

"Their ethics were not only imperfect, but often irreconcilable with the sound dictates of reason and morality, as they respect intercourse with those who are repulsive and anti-social as respecting other nations. They needed reformation, therefore, in an eminent degree.

III.—Jesus. "In this state of things among the Jews, Jesus appeared. His parents were obscure; his condition poor; his education nil; his natural endowment great; his life correct and innocent. He was meek, benevolent, patient, firm, uninterested, and of the sublimest eloquence. The disadvantages under which his doctrines appear are remarkable.

"Like Socrates and Epictetus he wrote nothing himself.
"But he had not, like them, a Xenophon or an Arrian to write for him. I name not Plato, who only used the name of Socrates to cover the whimsies of his own brain.

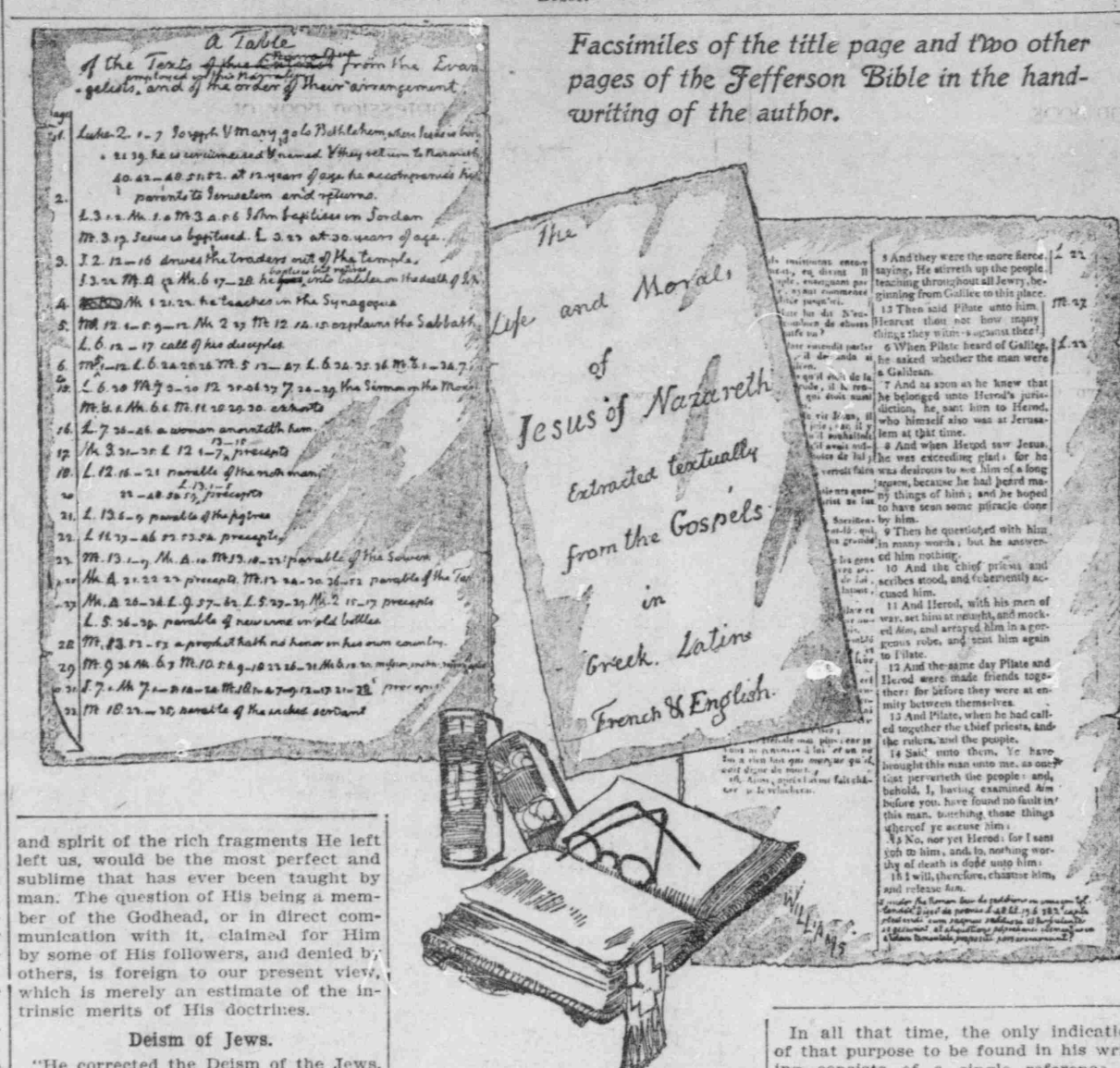
"On the contrary all the learned of his country, entrenched in his power and riches, were opposed to him, lest his labors should determine their advantages; and the committing to writing of his life and doctrines fell on unlettered and ignorant men, who wrote, too, from memory, and not till long after the transactions had passed.

"According to the ordinary fate of those who attempt to enlighten and reform mankind, he fell an early victim to the jealous and combination of the altar and throne, at about thirty-three years of age, his reason having not yet attained the maximum of its energy, nor the course of his preaching, which was but of three years at most, presented occasions for developing a complete system of morals.



THOMAS JEFFERSON.

An American Distinguished for Many and Varied Things, Not the Least of Them the Preparation of the "Jefferson Bible."



Facsimiles of the title page and two other pages of the Jefferson Bible in the handwriting of the author.

and spirit of the rich fragments he left left us, would be the most perfect and sublime that has ever been taught by man. The question of his being a member of the Godhead, or in direct communication with the most correct of the philosophers, and greatly more so than those of the Jews; and they went far beyond both in inculcating universal philanthropy, not only to kindred and friends, to neighbors and countrymen, but to all mankind, gathering all into one family, under the bonds of love, chastity, peace, common wants, and common aids. A development of this head will evince the peculiar superiority of the system of Jesus over all others.

The general letter sent to Jefferson's friends was as follows:

"A promise to a friend some time ago, executed but lately, has placed my religious creed on paper. I am desirous it should be perused by three or four particular friends, with whom, tho' I never desire to make a mystery of it, yet no occasion has happened to occur of explaining it to them. It is communicated for their personal satisfaction, to enable them to judge of the truth or falsehood of the libels published on that subject. When read, the return of the paper with this cover is asked.

"TH. JEFFERSON."

Speaks of Calumnies. References to calumnies and slanders are strangely numerous in all Jefferson's discussions of religion. In one letter, he speaks with much bitterness of a design which he charges to the Episcopians and Congregationalists of that day to establish their faith as the religious faith of the Government.

Jefferson, manifestly, held himself ready to oppose every such effort—genuine or fancied—which might be brought to his notice. The imminence of that conflict, doubtless, explained, from Jefferson's point of view, the care with which he kept his Bible secret. He was engaged upon it comparatively only a few years, but it occupied his mind for

parts of an extensive subject. I did not know that my comprehensive view of these schemes of morality had been taken till I saw your tract on Socrates and Jesus, and learnt from that that Mr. Toulmin had written a dissertation in the same way, but I am sure he has left of the field to employ your pen advantageously.

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In all that time, the only indication of that purpose to be found in his writing consists of a single reference in a letter to Dr. Rush and in occasional discussions of the classic philosophy.

But he had been to Baltimore, and had sent abroad for copies of a New Testament in Greek, Latin, French, and English. With all four languages he was intimately acquainted, and he knew the text of the four Gospels practically by heart. His admiration for the teachings of Christ is manifested in a letter which he wrote at about this time to Samuel Greenback. "There never was a more pure and sublime system of morality delivered to man," he said, "than is to be found in the four Evangelists." Beyond that tribute he apparently did not go.

Plan for his Bible. His plan for a Bible was to exclude from it every reference not indispensable to the story of Christ's life as a man, and his teachings as a moralist. Whatever was supernatural was to be omitted. When he finished nothing remained of the four Evangelists beyond a clear cold story of the Saviour's earthly life, and a compact statement of his preaching. The labor involved in preparing such a narrative was prodigious.

Jefferson would not trust himself to copy anything. Even if only a phrase the words were cut carefully from the pages of the printed text and that task was repeated in each of the four languages which Jefferson had selected. It was very difficult also to make the narrative consecutive.

Trial of Jesus. Thus in treating the arrest, trial, and death of Jesus he makes use of thirty

The Ancient Jews' Conception of the Attributes of the Deity Elicited No Sympathetic Response from the Sage of Monticello.

Meek and Lowly Jesus Attracted the Warm and Loving Reverence of the Philosopher, Although He Rejected the Divinity of the Christ.

quotations gathered from many paragraphs in all four gospels.

The story of the crucifixion and death begins with the 27th, 28th and 29th verses of the 27th chapter of Mark. Then come the verses from three to eight, followed by the matter in the 28th to the 33d verses of the 28d chapter of Luke. Then the 15th to the 24th verses of the 19th chapter of John. The compiler turns back to the 27th chapter of Mark and uses from the 38th to the 43d verses. He returns to the 23d chapter of Luke and gives the verses from 39 to 41, and then pastes in the 34th verse of the same chapter.

The best idea of Mr. Jefferson's system is to be obtained from the last page of his Bible, where the paragraphs describing the burial of the Saviour are pasted. There is no reference to the weeping of the temple, or the reading of the will, and he ends his narrative with this from John—19th chapter, 41st verse—"Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre wherein was never man yet laid, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done there they laid Jesus."

Published by Government.

As this work will be published by the national Government, it will consist of about 200 pages. The joint resolution of Congress provided for an introductory essay, "of not to exceed twenty-five pages," by Dr. Adler. The Testament itself will include eighty-two double pages of 164 pages as volumes are ordinarily numbered.

Jefferson himself numbered only alternate pages, in order that each page number might include a column in each of the four languages. Dr. Adler is expected to include in his preface the letter to Dr. Rush and the "Syllabus" which have already been given.

The reproduction of a work of this kind, with the sanction of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the Government Printing Office at hand, would be apparently a secondary undertaking; yet Congress found it was a peculiarly difficult undertaking. It would never do to tear the book apart and photograph each separate page; but none of the Government lithographers were willing to undertake the task without authority to follow exactly that course.

After much correspondence, a non-Government lithographing shop was found which could give suitable surety that the volume would not be injured in the slightest degree in the process of reproducing its pages.

Given to Printer.

Accordingly, Dr. Adler surrendered the key to the drawer in which the precious volume was kept, a messenger carried and delivered it to the Government Printing Office, a formal receipt was given to absolve the Smithsonian from responsibility for the work, and an agent was sent to the engraver's to watch it every moment while in their hands. For fear of accident to the plates already made, the "Bible" is still out of Washington. The plates, however, are finished, and the printing is to begin within a few days.

When once the press is started the engraver's hold upon the volume terminates, and it will begin anew its journey from messenger back to its separate compartment in Dr. Adler's desk. On almost that same day "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, Extracted Textually from the Gospels in Greek, Latin, French, and English," as Jefferson named his compilation, will be within reach of every student and every newspaper in the United States.

Odd "Gypsy" of a Chinaman Found in Far-off Manchuria

By DOUGLAS STORY.

SIN FOO is a "mafio," native groom, of a colleague of mine. He is called "groom" out of courtesy to the correspondent. As a matter of fact, the relation between master and man is somewhat difficult of definition. Were this published anywhere nearer than 10,000 miles away I should hesitate at the designation. Sin Foo's arms are long, and his revenges disconcerting.

He is small and lithe and wiry, with a cunning, unweary face, and the nose of a dwarfed Shyllock. His eyes are black and beads, his teeth white and shining, his pigtail gloriously glossy. His favorite attire is a suit of velveteens. In character and in appearance he is a very gypsy of a Chinaman.

Sin Is Ubiquitous. Engaged as a groom, Sin Foo's other qualities early made themselves apparent. No Cook's courier ever was so ubiquitous, so perplexingly polyhedral. We had started from Nuchwang in an official launch to make the journey to the Yinkow Railway station. At the commencement we blew the head off a cylinder and ceased to exist as a steam-locomotive, since the tide raked up stream at as many knots an hour as the boat had registered upon her official trial.

It was somewhat of an embarrassment, however, when we reached our intended destination. Without steam to fight the current the anchors refused to hold. Sometimes how on, sometimes stern on, most frequently broadside on, we whirled past the landing stage, the railway station, the goods sheds, onward into the dusk of a peculiarly uninviting night.

First Revelation.

By good fortune an anchor caught a snag and gripped. It held long enough to let us clamber into a lumbering sampan. It was then that usefulness of Sin Foo first revealed itself. The little sampan first revealed itself. The little sampan first revealed itself. The little sampan first revealed itself.

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the trainmen, terrorized the coolies, organized his fellows into effective service. The baggage melted into the crowded cars and the wagons one by one.

On the journey Sin Foo developed unsuspected capacity as an interpreter in Russian; as a conversationalist in French and German and Italian; as a commissariat officer and a body-servant. We comported ourselves with his utter failure as a groom.

Landed in Mukden. Dawn of the third day found us at Mukden in a siding, a man's height from the ground, with our horses to detain. Our engineering talent grappled with the problem and despaired. Once more Sin Foo was equal to the occasion. He directed a corps of coolies to build a landing stage with battens brought from heaven knows where, induced the linesman to shunt the wagons one by one to the platform, led the ponies out and forth.

We forgave the elation of his master, knowing the depression that would follow once this Admiration of the Orient was allocated to his proper duties in the stable.

Somewhat, it was Sin Foo who found us our lodging, who hired our extra servants, who brought us our horses. Each of us in turn sneaked to him to beg a favor. With time we discovered his master's horses were the fattest, the best groomed, the most cheaply fed. Our jealousy almost led to open rupture, but even Cassandra, in all her dejection, could not have been more consistent in her prophecy of evil than we.

Food in Wilderness.

Later his master received permission to proceed to General Kuropatkin at headquarters. The distance was only forty miles, and we were eager to save baggage. We took no foodstuffs, but ourselves, our horses, and our mafios, personally directed by Sin Foo—into an empty coal truck. Two nights and a day we spent in that dark and dusky residence. But for Sin Foo we should have starved. Somehow, out of the void and hungry prairie he materialized eggs, bread and native pastries, Chinese cakes, and Russian klieb. Out of the soldiers he wheeled warm tea and sugar. We lived like fighting cocks, and even the grime of the coal wagon rubbed off with time.

In the weeks that have passed Sin Foo has been house agent and horse dealer, minister plenipotentiary and major domo, veterinary surgeon, and comedian. We know he "squeezes" as only the Chinaman can squeeze. We know he has a commission off every deal he undertakes. We know he has cornered the market on horse droppings. We know he has driven out every free trader we momentarily have encountered. We know he has organized the servants into a trade union as implacable as any industrial combination of Manchester or Pittsburgh. We also know we are powerless against his grasp, and we know that Sin Foo knows.

Sin a Problem.

The identity of Sin Foo we have not been able to fathom. His friends are numerous as the grains of sand upon the seashore. English missionary and Mukden hanging judge, Russian officer and German attaché, humble coolie and haughty mandarin—each and all he calls "my friend." The marvel is they never fail to acknowledge the friendship. Sin Foo is the pivot of our Manchurian existence.

Sin Foo has his weaknesses as distinctive as his strength. He loves dress as an East End Cockney loves love. He is a miser. The day of our official reception by the Tartar general he wore the robes of a mandarin—the loan of a "friend"—a proceeding which, in a city where decapitations occur thrice daily, would have cancelled his policy in the most lenient of life insurance offices.